

Having thus described the preferred embodiments, what is claimed is:

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1. A chain guide comprising:

a bracket adapted for being secured to an associated engine, said bracket comprising a support surface, a bracket leading end and a bracket trailing end spaced from said leading end in a chain movement direction; and,

a guide blade comprising a blade leading end, a blade trailing end spaced from said blade leading end in said chain movement direction, a chain guide surface adapted for slidably supporting an associated chain moving in said chain movement direction, and an inner surface positioned on said support surface of said bracket, said guide blade selectively movable slidably on said support surface in said chain movement direction and a direction opposite said chain movement direction between a first position where said guide blade is separable from said bracket and a second position where said guide blade is fixedly secured to said bracket.

2. The chain guide as set forth in claim 1, wherein said guide blade comprises a plastic material.

3. The chain guide as set forth in claim 1, wherein said blade leading end defines a space that receives said bracket leading end when said blade is positioned in said second position.

4. The chain guide as set forth in claim 3, wherein said bracket leading end defines an open notch, and wherein said guide blade includes a hook-shaped portion that defines said space, said guide blade further comprising a rib that at least partially spans said space defined by said hook-shaped portion whereby said rib is received in said open notch defined by said bracket leading end when said bracket leading end is received in said space defined by said hook-shaped portion of said guide blade.

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5. The chain guide as set forth in claim 3, wherein said guide blade further comprises a male connector projecting outwardly from said inner surface and located closer to said blade trailing end than said blade leading end, and wherein said support surface of said bracket defines an aperture conformed and dimensioned to engage said male connector and prevent separation of guide blade inner surface from the support surface in the region of the male connector when said guide blade is moved to said second position.

6. The chain guide as set forth in claim 5, wherein said male connector comprises a leg projecting outwardly from said inner surface of said guide blade and an enlarged end connected to said leg at a location spaced from said inner surface of said guide blade, and wherein said aperture comprises a first portion conformed and dimensioned to accommodate passage therethrough of said leg and said enlarged end, and a second portion in communication with said first portion, said second portion conformed and dimensioned to allow passage therethrough of said leg and to block passage therethrough of said enlarged end, whereby, when said male connector is moved from said first portion of said aperture to said second portion of said aperture, said support surface of said bracket is located between said inner surface of said guide blade and said enlarged end and said enlarged end is engaged with said bracket to prevent movement of said inner surface of said guide blade away from said support surface of said bracket.

7. The chain guide as set forth in claim 6, wherein, when said guide blade is in said second position, said leg of said male connector is located in said second portion of said aperture and engaged with portions of said support surface defining said second portion of said aperture so that said leg is restrained against movement in a direction transverse to said chain movement direction.

8. The chain guide as set forth in claim 5, wherein said male connector is defined by first and second resilient legs that project outwardly from said inner surface of said guide blade and diverge relative to each other, and wherein said aperture defined in said support surface comprises a first region conformed and dimensioned to allow passage therethrough of said male connector when said legs are relaxed, a third portion that is conformed and dimensioned to receive said legs of said male connector and to retain said legs, and a second portion that interconnects said first portion of said aperture to said third portion of said aperture, whereby said male connector is slidably movable from said first portion of said aperture through said second portion of said aperture and into said third portion of said aperture.

9. The chain guide as set forth in claim 5, further comprising:

a locking nib projecting outwardly from said inner surface of said guide blade, said locking nib located so that it engages said bracket when said guide blade is located in said second position whereby said locking nib inhibits sliding movement of said guide blade from said second position to said first position.

10. The chain guide as set forth in claim 9, wherein said locking nib is located in the region of said male connector whereby said locking nib projects into said aperture defined in said support surface when said blade is moved to its second position.

11. The chain guide as set forth in claim 8, further comprising:

a second projection extending outwardly from said blade inner surface in the region of said first and second legs and conformed and located relative to said first and second legs so that said second projection is located in said second portion of said aperture when said legs are located in said third portion of said aperture whereby said second projection and said guide blade connected thereto are restrained against movement transverse to said chain movement direction.

12. The chain guide as set forth in claim 11, wherein said first and second legs of said male connector project outwardly from said inner surface of said guide blade at respective locations that are offset relative to each other so that one of said legs is closer to said guide blade trailing end than the other of said legs.

13. The chain guide as set forth in claim 5, wherein said bracket defines a locking notch and wherein said blade comprises a tab that projects outwardly therefrom and that is received in said locking notch when said guide blade is in said second position whereby, upon attempted movement of said guide blade from said second position to said first position, said tab engages a portion of said bracket defining said locking notch and inhibits movement of said guide blade from said second position to said first position.

14. The chain guide as set forth in claim 3, wherein said bracket leading end comprises a tongue projecting outwardly therefrom that is received in said space defined by said guide blade leading end when said guide blade is located in said second position.

15. The chain guide as set forth in claim 14, wherein said guide blade leading end engages said tongue and restrains said guide blade against movement except in a direction opposite said chain travel direction.

16. The chain guide as set forth in claim 3, wherein said blade comprises first and second legs projecting therefrom on opposite sides of said chain guide surface, and wherein said bracket comprises an upper flange that defines said support surface between opposite front and rear edges, said front and rear edges of said upper flange defining respective first and second locations positioned to receive said first and second legs, respectively, when said guide blade is located in said first position, said legs defining respective first and second feet that engage said upper flange when said guide blade is moved slidably to said second position

whereby said inner surface of said guide blade is held adjacent said support surface of said bracket by said legs.

17. The chain guide as set forth in claim 1, wherein said guide blade defines first and second lips that project outwardly above said chain guide surface on opposite front and rear edges of said chain guide surface.

18. The chain guide as set forth in claim 1, wherein said support surface of said bracket is defined with a draft angle and said inner surface of said guide blade is defined with a reverse draft angle whereby said support surface and said inner surface are non-planar and mate with each other to inhibit movement of said guide blade in a direction transverse to said chain travel direction.

19. A chain guide comprising:

a bracket adapted for being secured to an associated engine, said bracket comprising a support surface, a bracket leading end and a bracket trailing end spaced from said leading end in a chain movement direction;

a plastic guide blade comprising a blade leading end, a blade trailing end, a chain guide surface adapted for slidably supporting an associated chain moving in said chain movement direction, and an inner surface positioned adjacent said support surface of said bracket, said guide blade selectively movable slidably on said support surface between a first position where said guide blade is separable from said bracket and a second position where said guide blade is fixedly secured to said bracket, said guide blade comprising: (i) a portion defined at said blade leading end that engages a portion of said bracket when said blade is located in said second position; and, (ii) a male connector projecting outwardly from said inner surface that is received in an aperture defined by said bracket when said guide blade is in said first position and that engages said bracket and prevents separation of guide blade inner surface from the support surface of the bracket when said guide blade is moved to said second position from said first position.

20. The chain guide as set forth in claim 18, further comprising:

a locking projection that extends outwardly from said guide blade, said projection adapted to engage said bracket when said guide blade is located in said second position to inhibit sliding movement of said guide blade to said first position.

21. A chain guide comprising:

a bracket adapted for being secured to an associated engine, said bracket comprising a support surface, a bracket leading end, a bracket trailing end spaced from said leading end in a chain movement direction, and front and rear edges extending between said bracket leading end and said bracket trailing end on opposite sides of said support surface;

a guide blade comprising a blade leading end, a blade trailing end spaced from said blade leading end in said chain movement direction, a chain guide surface adapted for slidably supporting an associated chain moving in said chain movement direction, and an inner surface positioned adjacent said support surface of said bracket, said guide blade selectively movable slidably on said support surface between a first position where said guide blade is separable from said bracket and a second positioned where said guide blade is fixedly secured to said bracket, said guide blade comprising: (i) a connector portion at said blade leading end that receives a portion of said bracket when said blade is positioned in said second position; and, (ii) first and second legs projecting from said guide blade on opposite sides of said chain guide surface, said legs defining respective first and second feet that respectively engage said front and rear edges of said bracket when said guide blade is moved slidably from said first position to said second position whereby said inner surface of said guide blade is held adjacent said support surface of said bracket by said legs.